‘Little Spain’ or ‘Little Galicia’? Cinematic Representations of Galician Migration to New York and New Jersey

Miranda-Barreiro, David

Journal of Romance Studies

DOI:
10.3828/jrs.2020.26

Published: 01/01/2020

Peer reviewed version

‘Little Spain’ or ‘Little Galicia’? Cinematic Representations of Galician Migration to New York and New Jersey

David Miranda-Barreiro

Bangor University

Abstract

This article looks at three cinematic representations of the Galician migrant community in the United States: the documentaries *Os 15000 de Newark* (2007) and *Little Spain* (2014), and the feature-length film *Little Galicia* (2015). The analysis of these films focuses especially on the influence that their chosen framing (Ellies 2012) has on the migrants’ performance of their cultural identity. By assessing the performative aspect of identity (Schechner 2013), this article also examines the possibility of considering Galicianness as a transnational positioning, globally or glocally performed, rather than a geographically fixed essence.

Keywords: Galicia, migration, identity, film, performance, New York, New Jersey

David Miranda-Barreiro is a Senior Lecturer in Hispanic Studies at Bangor University and co-editor of *Galicia 21: Journal of Contemporary Galician Studies*. He specialises in travel writing, migration and exile in the Spanish and Galician contexts, and Galician comics.

d.m.barreiro@bangor.ac.uk

School of Languages, Literatures and Linguistics
Department of Modern Languages and Cultures
Bangor University
LL57 2DG
Bangor, Gwynedd

Spanish migration to the United States has until recently been mostly overlooked in academic studies, with the exception of a few contributions such as those by David Cardús (1986), Germán Rueda (1993 and 2008) and James D. Fernández (2012). The oblivion often suffered by this phenomenon is captured in the title of James D. Fernández and Luis Argeo's book, *Invisible Immigrants. Spaniards in the US (1898-1945)* (2014), which counteracts such a tendency by giving visibility to this migrant community in an extensive photographic collection. Similarly, the strong focus of Galician migration studies on Latin America has traditionally neglected other locations with a smaller presence of Galicians, such as the U.S. which, for example, was the destination of only 3.75% of those who migrated to the American continent between 1921 and 1930 (Alonso 2006: 18).

Despite this figure, Galicians were in fact quite prominent within Spanish migration to the U.S. In a testimonial text about Alfonso Daniel Rodríguez Castelao's period in North America (1938-1940), the Galician exile Emilio González López argued that 90% of the 15,000 Spaniards living in New York at the time were Galician (2000: 69). Although González López does not provide any sources to substantiate this assertion, Rueda's seminal study of Spanish migration to the U.S. (1993) confirms that Galicians were the majority within this migratory movement; in 1933 and 1934, for instance, they made up half of the Spaniards registered at the Consulates (1993: 63). Similar figures are reflected in the specific case of New York where, according to the reports gathered by Rueda, 50% of the 12,000 Spaniards living in this city from 1933 to 1935 were of Galician origin (1993: 63-64). Although these numbers do not match González López estimations, we must also take into account the number of migrants who arrived illegally (mostly sailors), even after the 1921 National Origins Quota Act, which restricted immigration, was passed (Alonso 2006: 25).

Recently, a growing corpus of academic works has highlighted the importance of this migratory movement for specific areas of Galicia. From 1917 to 1941, New York was the

main destination from the Atlantic coast, including towns such as Bueu, Boiro, Ribeira, Muros, Carnota, Bergondo, Sada and Oleiros (García-Rodeja and Pérez Rey 2007: 429). Furthermore, there are traces of this migration in other parts of Galicia; for example, Tomiño and Taborda (Jorge Pereira 2004: 108). Such relevance is also reflected in the creation of local societies or 'sociedades de instrución microterritoriais' [micro-territorial educational societies] in the host country, sites of sociability which had the function, amongst others, of fostering a sense of belonging (Núñez Seixas 2016: 29). It is significant that the migrants associated through their proximity, to the extent that two Galician towns such as Bergondo and Sada, separated by only 8 km, had distinct local societies in the United States. Although these institutions tended to merge into bigger ones after 1929 (for example, into the still active Casa Galicia – Unity Gallega founded in 1940), their existence reflects the migrants' attachment to their local Galician identity.

Outside of New York, Galicians were also present in other parts of the country. Ana Varela-Lago points out that 'Nova York era o centro dunha rede de colonias españolas […] que se estendían por varios estados da costa oriental do país, como Nova Jersey, Pensilvania, Ohio, Vermont e West Virginia, onde predominaban galegos, asturianos e andaluces' [New York was at the centre of a network of Spanish colonies […] that spread across several states of the East Coast, such as New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Vermont and West Virginia, where the majority were Galicians, Asturians and Andalusians] (2008: 74). Newark, located just across the Hudson River from New York City, also became the destination for a number of Galicians, mostly from Ourense (García-Rodeja and Pérez Rey 2007: 429; Pérez Rey 2008: 34), to the extent that this city became popularly known as 'Nuarca', in a Galicianised form (Murado 2008: 130). Nowadays, there still seems to be a significant number of Galicians in New York and New Jersey, as shown by Manuel Vilar Álvarez's study of this community (2009) and the estimations made by the newspaper *España Exterior. El periódico*

de las comunidades españolas en el mundo [Exterior Spain. The Newspaper of Spanish Communities in the World], which in 2015 argued that there were more than 17,600 Galicians living in the U.S. Miguel Anxo Santos Rego goes even further and suggests that the number of Galicians in this country 'non baixa hoxe dos corenta mil' [nowadays is no less than 40,000] (2015: 85).[1]

This article examines the representation of Galician migration to the U.S. in three films: the documentaries *Os 15000 de Newark* [The 15,000 of Newark] (2007) by Anxo Fernández and *Little Spain* (2014) by Artur Balder, and Alber Ponte's fictional film *Little Galicia* (2015).[2] These films offer a twofold insight into the cinematic portrayal of this community: on the one hand, how it is represented according to the chosen framing of the film; and on the other, how the migrants represent themselves (in the case of the documentaries). When analysing the documentaries, I will therefore look at these representations as dual performances, both as part of the way the migrants 'act' for the camera and also considering cultural identity as a performance in itself (in the everyday life and social interactions of the migrants). If, as Richard Schechner argues, 'performances exist only as actions, interactions, and relationships' (2013: 30), to what extent is the way the migrants perform their identity affected by the different 'cultural frames' (Fisher 1997) established by the documentary director, and how are they re-enacted in the fictional film? On the premise that Galicians' 'relationship with the world beyond the state is intrinsically conditioned by, as well as mediated through, the relationship with Spain' (Hooper 2011: 2), how do the members of this migrant community perform an arguably multiple and transnational identity (Galician, Spanish, American) in these films? Moreover, if cultural identity is a production continually in process rather than a fixed and finished fact (Hall 1996), can we consider the migrants' performance of Galicianness as a 'copy' or a 'simulacrum' (Deleuze 1990: 257), or is Galician identity rather decentred and mobile?[3] By

answering these questions, I aim to contribute to current debates on the view of Galicianness as a global or glocal culture,[4] as has been suggested in recent studies, for example by Kirsty Hooper (2011), Eugenia R. Romero (2012), and José Colmeiro (2017). I will begin by examining the documentary *Little Spain* and will then move on to a combined analysis of *Os 15000* and *Little Galicia*.

Little Spain: Flamenco Dancers and the Apostle Saint James on 14th Street

The documentary *Little Spain* by Artur Balder sets out to recuperate the memory of the Spanish neighbourhood that used to exist on 14th street in New York, described by the voice-over that leads the film as 'a tiny outpost for Spanish immigrants' in the early 20th century, where 'festivals featuring typical flamenco dancers' were held, and several Spanish restaurants could be found. The voice-over establishes a spatial focus on a specific area of New York, and places a particular emphasis on the role played by the Sociedad Española de Socorros Mutuos [Spanish Mutual Aid Society], commonly known as 'La Nacional' [The National] by Spanish New York migrants. La Nacional, founded in 1868, was the oldest Spanish society in New York and is still functioning today. The opening images of the documentary show the entrance of its building, which is flanked by Spanish and U.S. flags. The film, therefore, frames its narrative within a set of very specific coordinates: the performance of Spanish identity associated with La Nacional on 14th Street. This modus operandi can be explained through Kimber Fisher's notion of 'cultural frames' as 'socio-culturally and cognitively generated patterns which help people to understand their world by shaping other forms of deep structural discourse' (1997: paragraph 5.1). Fisher also argues that 'frames function metaphorically, stimulating people to focus on particular elements of representations while ignoring others', and that 'elements of cultural frames thus operate metonymically' (1997: paragraph 5.4). Similarly, the documentary focuses on a migrant

community from Spain living on one single street, as a metonymy for Spanish migration to the city. Such framing 'ignores' the importance that local and regional identities had for the migrants of this community, and hence the framing of this phenomenon within the overarching label 'Spanish' fails to provide a more accurate picture of their everyday life and identity adherence.

However, the prominence of Galician migration to NYC begins to appear between the frames from the very start of the documentary. As the opening image of the Spanish and U.S. flags dissolves into some old photographs of the Spanish community, we see some traces of Galician New Yorkers: a photo of José María Vázquez, from Chantada, in front of his clothes shop on West 14th Street (also included in Fernández and Argeo's photographic collection), and a parade taking place in front of 'La Coruña' restaurant (which also appears on the front cover of the film's DVD). After these and other photos are shown, a fade to black brings the title of the film to centre stage, as we see 'Little Spain', reinforcing the framing of the documentary. The film then shows alternate fragments of interviews with six male members of the Spanish migrant community, which are combined with photos and footage from the archives of La Nacional and other sources. The narrative is controlled by a voice-over – the 'voice-of-God commentator', following Nichols (2010: 59) – that intervenes from time to time to provide some context about the history of this community and of this area of New York. Flamenco music features prominently on the soundtrack, and a clip of a flamenco concert at La Nacional is also included towards the end of the film. Underlining the limiting and controlled framing of the film, all interviews take place in the same location: an interior room (likely inside La Nacional) where the migrants sit in an antique chair in front of a black background. The migrants are filmed using a static shot that is only slightly altered by sparse use of zoom, and there are only two fleeting instances in which we see them outside of this setting.

The first two participants are the Galician José Pérez and his son Joe, who was born in New York. They are the owners of El Faro restaurant [The Lighthouse],[5] and are representatives of both first and second generation Galician migrants, although they are presented as just Spanish. Their testimony highlights the significance of the Galician community in New York, as well as their sense of local identity, although this is not entirely apparent at first. In his first contribution, José refers to 14th Street as 'muy española […] había restaurantes españoles, todos de la parte de Galicia más bien, bueno, y de Bilbao también y de… había de varios puntos de España, y había un ambiente muy español' [very Spanish […] there were Spanish restaurants, all of them were from the area of Galicia more like, well, and from Bilbao too and from… there were ones from several parts of Spain and there was a very Spanish atmosphere]. As part of her theory of narrative analysis deployed to examine life story testimonies, Catherine Kohler Riessman argues that her methodological approach 'examines the informant's story and analyses how it is put together, the linguistic and cultural resources it draws on, and how it persuades a listener of authenticity. […] We ask, why was the story told *that* way?' (1993: 2). The repeated use of the superlative ('muy español') by Joe, which is also recurrent in other testimonies included in the film, seems to work as an emphasis for Spanishness to prevail over other identities (Basque too, in this case).[6] As John Ellies has shown, the responses to documentary interviews are to some extent performed, a 'strategic self-presentation' which is highly dependent on how the exchange is framed: 'the suspicion of "performance" in documentary does have a grain of truth to it. Not that sincerity is somehow missing, but that we do not properly understand how the exchange we are witnessing was originally framed' (2012: 69). The identity narrative performed by José Pérez to represent the Spanish migrant community therefore responds to the film's framing.

FIG. 1 and 2 here

However, the emphasis placed on performing a homogenising Spanish identity is constantly challenged both by the testimonies from José and Joe and also through the archival material shown in the documentary. José's choice of words points not only to a greater presence of Galicians, but also insinuates that he had considerable contact with them, as he is hesitant to name other places within Spain. Later on, whereas the other interviewees have been referring to themselves and other migrants as 'españoles' [Spaniards], José emphasises the presence of Galicians in New York: 'había una colonia muy grande, sobre todo de la parte de La Coruña, de Sada y de Orense, de todo Galicia había, mucha gente […] y nos juntábamos por allí por Hudson Street, en Hamilton Square y tenías allí una colonia muy grande, muy grande de coruñeses y orensanos' [there was a very big colony, especially from the area of La Coruña, from Sada and Orense, there were people from all over Galicia, many people [...] and we used to meet there by Hudson Street, in Hamilton Square and there you had a very big, very big colony of people from La Coruña and Orense].[7] Once again, traces of the Galician migrant community appear between the frames, as echoes of the micro-territorial societies they founded in the early twentieth century that are ignored in the film, and a sense of Galician community appears which also supersedes the geographical locations established by the documentary, as José mentions other locations where the migrants were settled or used to gather. José's bilingual identity (Spanish-Galician) is also subtlety hinted at when, referring to one of his first jobs in the city, he uses a conjugated infinitive, which is a characteristic trait of Galician that does not exist in Spanish: 'ganaba bastante para *vivirmos*' (my emphasis) [I earned enough for *us to live* on]. By contrast with the recurrent assertion made by other interviewees that 'Little Spain' was a place where everybody spoke Spanish, the almost ghostly appearance of Galician in his Spanish discourse suggests that he is a Galician speaker. As Xosé M. Núñez Seixas argues, 90% or more of the migrants who left Galicia until 1930 had Galician as their first language (2016: 34). Although José arrived in

the U.S. after the Spanish Civil War, it seems that most Galician migrants who left during the dictatorship (and even after) were still Galician speakers, as we will see in Anxo Fernández's film later on.[8] Nevertheless, Balder's documentary does not even consider the possibility that Spanish migrants spoke any other language than Spanish amongst themselves, therefore invisibilising a key marker of identity in favour of an overarching Spanish one.

José's son Joe speaks in English, although he also proves to be knowledgeable about Spanish culture during his testimony, a fact that highlights his transnational identity as a second generation migrant: 'even though I was born here [in New York] I always felt I was Spanish, a Spaniard, and a New Yorker, not one or the other'. As in José's case, although Galician identity seems initially excluded or ignored, it surfaces within Joe's account of the celebration of Santiago Apóstolo [Apostle Saint James] in New York: 'every summer, on the 25th of July, they would celebrate a festival […] they would have food, from Spain, they would have flamenco dancers, musicians […] in celebration of Santiago Apóstol, which is the patron saint of [brief pause] Galicia'. The viewer cannot know whether Joe speaks Galician, but this clarification at the end of his contribution shows his awareness of the importance of this saint for Galician culture. Indeed, Santiago is also the patron of Spain and is celebrated in other parts of this country, but Joe claims it solely for his parents' home region. In the New York celebrations, the cultural Galicianness of Saint James celebrations coexists with other stereotypical images of Spain, such as flamenco dancers. The combination of images and stereotypes from different parts of Spain seems to have been prevalent since the origins of the Spanish migrant community in New York. For example, a poster of a 'Gran romería y verbena' [Great party and open-air dance], organised by Casa de Galicia in 1929, displays a similar combination: the drawing of a girl dressed in the typical Andalusian dress is placed next to a dancing couple in the Galician traditional outfit, and includes the announcement that 'películas genuinamente españolas' [genuine Spanish films] would be

shown.[9] The way New York Galicians interpreted and performed their identity can therefore be understood as multi-faceted (contrary to the homogenising framing of the documentary), since their Spanish identity tended to be expressed through local images (Núñez Seixas 2016: 34). U.S. identity was also added to this existing set, either owing to the adaptation of the first generation to the customs of the host country, or to the identification of the second generation with its culture, as evidenced by Joe's testimony. The tendency to become integrated into U.S. society started already in the 1920s, as shown by Ana Varela-Lago (2008: 77). Rather than a uniquely local or national identity, the migrants seem to embrace a transnational one (Galician-Spanish-U.S. American).

As part of the migrants' 'identity performance', we must also consider their target audience. As well as aiming to 'mark or change identity' and 'to make or foster community' (Schechner 2013: 46), the way an identity is performed by migrant communities can also have practical and even economic purposes. This is exemplified by the Andalusian decoration (flamenco dancers and bullfighters painted on the walls) of the restaurant El Faro, as shown in the documentary. Rather than Galician motifs, its owners resorted to the most identifiable Spanish images, arguably to appeal to their potential U.S. customers, as well as to other Spaniards residing in the city.[10] Such a choice can be also applied to the film itself. Apart from the interest that the story of 14th Street can spark in Spain, the documentary's aim to promote the at the time declining La Nacional also seems to be targeting both current Spanish residents and Americans interested in all things Spanish, including the food offered in the society's own restaurant. The overarching frame chosen to portray the Spanish community and the use of stereotypical imagery and music might also respond to the way most Americans would expect Spanish identity to be performed. Significantly, the film finishes with an extract from a speech by Federico García Lorca on the importance of theatre for building a national culture: 'the theatre is one of the most expressive and useful instruments

for the edification of a country. It is also the parameter which marks its greatness or its descent' [the quote continues]. Whereas the reference to García Lorca is justified owing to the significance of New York in his work, the emphasis on theatre seems out of place, as this artistic discipline has not been mentioned earlier in the film. The viewers have, however, seen a variety of performances, from flamenco dancers and musicians, to the way the interviewees have performed their respective identities. Film, like theatre, also fulfils the function of performing and therefore imagining national identities. However, as evidenced by the participants interviewed in this documentary, the framing of a homogeneous and all-encompassing Spanish identity is undermined by the cultural practices and the everyday experiences of the Galician migrants as expressed by themselves. How would the migrants respond to a different framing of their experience and the history of their community? This question will be examined in the following section, as Anxo Fernández's documentary *Os 15000 de Newark* and Alber Ponte's film *Little Galicia* take a completely different approach to *Little Spain*.

The 15,000 of 'Little Galicia': Performing a Transnational Galicianness

Anxo Fernández's documentary focuses on the existence of a Galician community in Newark and New York. This approach is showcased from the DVD's front cover and its promotional text. The cover includes a traffic sign where 'Newark' is superimposed over a Galician flag, announcing the existence of a broadly Galician community in this city. The perception of Newark as a Galician city in the U.S. is also shown in Alber Ponte's feature film *Little Galicia*. Shot in Spanish, this is a sort of comedy of intrigue in which the characters pretend to be someone else, that is, perform a different identity. The film starts in Noia, where Carlos (Fran Grela) is given two plane tickets to go to Newark to attend the wedding of the daughter of his mother's best friend Isabel (Mabel Rivera), who emigrated to the U.S. when she was

fifteen. Carlos' mother cannot attend so sends her son instead, who invites Gonzalo (Gustavo Salmerón) to go with him. From the beginning, the film confers considerable visibility upon the Galician migrant community and includes abundant references to the Galicianness of its migrant characters. Before leaving, Carlos has a brief conversation with a friend, who informs him of the existence of a 'Little Galicia' in Newark: 'es como un ghetto gallego, tipo Harlem, pero sin negros. Lo llaman Little Galicia […] en Little Galicia te va a parecer que sigues aquí' [it's like a Galician ghetto, like Harlem but without blacks. They call it Little Galicia […] in Little Galicia you're going to feel like you're still here]. Similarly, the framing of the documentary leads real migrants to showcase their strong attachment to their Galician identity. Compared to *Little Spain*'s static and geographically restricted focus, *Os 15000* is a more mobile film, which includes a wide variety of testimonies, from both men and women and from first to third generation migrants, including migrants who left Galicia in the 1930s as well as those who arrived more recently. The documentary begins, in fact, in motion, as we see the popular Galician TV presenter Paco Lodeiro arrive in New York and go from there to New Jersey. Lodeiro also appears on screen asking the interviewees questions, although his presence diminishes as the film progresses, allowing the documentary to be sustained almost solely by the migrants' testimonies. We also see the participants in different locations: their homes, their place of work or own business, in a bar, and at their societies. The documentary shows a plethora of experiences, of success and adaptation but also of sacrifice and longing for their homeland. Consequently, Fernández's film achieves a greater insight into the way the migrants understand and perform their cultural identity in their everyday life. However, whereas in *Little Spain* their Galician identity appeared between the frames as a consequence of being 'ignored', in these films it is Spanish identity that resists being unnoticed by the chosen framing.[11] This happens mostly when the migrants refer to their place of birth, which most of them allude to as 'España' [Spain]. Moreover, when they talk about their food and

customs and even themselves, they often use the adjective 'españoles/as' [Spaniards]. For example, in *Os 15000*, the migrant Daniel Hermida argues, referring to the sense of unity of the Galician community, that: 'eu que lle din a man a moitos galegos digo que sí que estamos moi unidos, pero España sería un país que sin envidia non sería España' [I have shaken the hands of many Galicians and I can say that yes, we are very united, but Spain is a country that wouldn't be Spain if there wasn't any envy]. Something similar happens in *Little Galicia*, where the characters refer to their holidays in Spain, and sometimes allude to themselves as Spanish-speaking Spaniards. It is noticeable, nevertheless, how their Spanishness is always understood, and performed, as Galicianness.

With the exception of only two people, all the adult interviewees from *Os 15000* speak in Galician. As for the younger generations, two girls speak in Spanish but there are also several cases of Galician speakers. The strong presence of Galician in this community even surprises Lodeiro who, while interviewing Román García, a young firefighter and former policeman of Galician descent who grew up in the U.S., exclaims: 'eu estoume preguntando ás veces […] e non hai ninguén que fale inglés, porque eu falo con todos en galego!' [I'm sometimes wondering […] isn't there anybody who speaks English here? Because I speak with everybody in Galician!]. Lodeiro's humorous comment leads to the documentary exploring language use in this migrant community. Although born in the U.S., adult second generation migrants like Stephen Thomas and Juan Manuel Abeigón speak naturally in Galician, a fact that shows how the language was passed on by their parents. Abeigón, who speaks with 'gheada' and 'seseo' (popular phonetic traits of spoken Galician), also emphasises the multilingualism of second generation Galician migrants: 'nunca me din conta de que estaba falando "ghallegho", solo falaba, porque miña nai nunca aprendeu o inglés, "entonses" na miña casa de pequenos xa falábamos o inglés, o castellano, o "ghallegho", e cos "visiños" do lado o portugués' [I never realised I was speaking in

Galician, I just spoke, because my mother never learnt English, so at home, when we were little, we already spoke English, Castilian, Galician, and also Portuguese with our next door neighbours]. Some migrants also slip in some English words such as 'so', a case of code-switching replicated in the film *Little Galicia*, where they use a mixture of Spanish and English, also adding Galician words from time to time. Rather than choosing one language, the migrants underscore their multilingualism, and therefore their sense of having a transnational identity, both as regards the relationship between Galicia and Spain, and between Galicia/Spain and the U.S.[12] Such transnationalism is also reflected in their conception of 'home', which is not fixed but exists simultaneously in two places, which even overlap symbolically. On the one hand, Abeigón explains: 'eu considero que vivo alá e veño traballar a Norteamérica "onse" meses ó ano' [I think of myself as living there [in Galicia] and I come to work in North America for eleven months a year]; on the other hand, he also emphasises how he has a Galician home in New Jersey, as there are all sorts of shops owned by Galicians, to the extent that: 'eu podo pasar un ano enteiro sen tratar con norteamericanos […]. É como se estuvéramos alá. Temos ría, temos porto de mar, temos catedral, iglesia, éche "ighual" que alá' [I can spend a whole year without interacting with North Americans […] It's as if we were there. We have an estuary, we have a seaport, we have a cathedral, a church, it's exactly like 'back home']. By contrast, the distance between 'here' and 'there' seems more difficult to negotiate for some members of the first generation who, resorting to a characteristic trait of Galician migration, express their 'morriña' [homesickness] and their wish to return to Galicia. For example, Aurora Gonzáles (already retired), says: 'quérome ir para alá […] A miña terra é a miña terra' [I want to go back home. My land is my land].

The migrants perform their identity in the U.S. by re-enacting the cultural practices (the identity performances) of the homeland. Following Stuart Hall, 'instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact […] we should think, instead, of identity as a

"production", which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation' (1996: 110). In order for cultures to persist, they need to be constantly performed (in social rituals and in everyday practices); at the same time, for the migrants to still feel part of their culture, they also have to perform their identity. Apart from the language, the migrants display several markers of 'practical identity', to follow Romero's use of Patrick Colm Hogan's term (Romero 2012: xi). Similarly to other migrant communities and to the everyday practices of their homeland, traditional music, dancing and food work as identity markers that are performed by the migrants. Whereas the music and dancing shown in *Little Spain* as signifiers of cultural identity are restricted to a homogenising and stereotypical use of flamenco, *Os 15000* places the focus on how Galician traditional music and dancing is passed on to the younger generations at the Galician centres. The young member of the second generation Alicia Lijó explains in Spanish: 'empezamos a venir aquí, y fue por empuje de mis padres que empecé a bailar y a tocar la gaita, y después, pues a nivel que iba creciendo pues fui yo quien decidía volver cada año a seguir bailando' [we started coming here, and it was because of my parents' influence that I started dancing and playing the bagpipe, and afterwards, as I was growing up, I decided to come back every year of my own accord to continue dancing]. As we hear the last words of Lijó's testimony, the documentary shows a group of young girls dancing to the sound of Galician bagpipes, and one of them explains the movements to the others, in English. In her study of the Gujarati East African community in Britain, Maya Parmar refers to dancing as a 'form of embodied text used to express identity' (2013: 143). She also pays attention to the 'sense of cultural hybridity' (2013: 146) that is revealed in these practices, which she argues is 'akin to bilingualism', since the young members of the diaspora are able to move across different cultures, leading to 'an amalgamation of varying traditions and identities' (2013: 147). Parmar's assertion is reminiscent of the overlapping of English and traditional Galician music

in the film, which again showcases the transnational identity of the younger generation. Santos Rego, in fact, describes Galician centres in the U.S. as ‘contextos híbridos’ [hybrid contexts] (2015: 92). Such hybridity is also present in *Little Galicia* via a musical performance: at the wedding, a Galician bagpiper plays in the streets of New Jersey as the bride arrives at the church in a car. This overlapping of tradition and modernity, of a rural culture and an urban setting, is also a central element of the TV advert ‘Vivamos como Galegos NYC’ [Live Like Galicians NYC] by the supermarket chain Gadis, where a muscular and topless bagpiper plays on top of a yellow cab in the middle of Times Square. The performance of Galician culture as global, or rather ‘glocal’, has in fact been emphasised by Colmeiro, who argues that the recent growth of the Galician audiovisual sector has been ‘instrumental in the redefinition of Galician cultural identity, opening up to the world in the global age’, being able ‘to transcend both cultural essentialism and homogeneous uniformity by successfully incorporating the global in the local and by simultaneously exploring and inscribing their “Galicianness” in the global arena’ (2017: 43). By emphasising the Galicianness of migrant communities settled at the heart of a global culture like the U.S., both *Os 15000* and *Little Galicia* also contribute to performing Galician identity ‘glocally’. This is visually and musically represented in Fernández’s documentary when Lodeiro and the migrant Pilar Domínguez sing a cappella a verse of the song ‘Galicia terra nosa’ [Galicia, Our Land] by the 1960s-1970s band, Los Tamara:

> Galicia terra querida,
> terra de labregos pobres.
> Cada corredoira túa,
> mil segredos ten de amores.

[Galicia my beloved land/land of poor peasants/each of your hollow ways/hides one thousand love secrets]

The local and rural images of the song and the references to Galicia's poverty are superimposed on the urban New York skyline seen from New Jersey. Furthermore, Los Tamara's song, sung from the point of view of a migrant that longs to return to his homeland, is in itself a transnational performance of Galician culture, as it combines influences from traditional Galician melodies, Cuban choirs reminiscent of Habanera tunes and pop-rock and soul musical arrangements. This song is one of many examples of a culture marked by migration, which can only be understood in glocal terms, not only in the transnationalism embraced by second and third generation migrants, but also in the influence of migrant communities in both 'maintaining the language and preserving cultural practices' in the host countries (Romero 2012: 3) and shaping contemporary Galician culture in Galicia (Hooper 2011: 19).

Food is another marker of identity that is widely performed by the migrant community. In some cases, this performance is 'synchronised' with the social rites taking place in Galicia, not only national celebrations like Saint James', but also local festivities. If (following Hall) identity is a production always in process, we can consider culture and identity not as geographically fixed but as movable, as argued by Romero (2012: 125-126). The materiality of performance makes Galician culture and identity present, both in Galicia and in the host country. For example, referring to the first time he ate Galician food in Galicia, Abeigón states: 'empanada, era unha empanada de xurelos, que fixera a miña avoa, sabía "ighualiña", "ighualiña" á que facía aquí a miña nai!' [a pasty, it was a mackerel pasty, that my grandmother had made, it tasted exactly the same, exactly the same as the ones my mom made here!]. Abeigón's experience of Galician culture is neither a simulacrum nor a

copy, in Gilles Deleuze's definition (1990: 257). If we consider that Galicianness exists not as attached to a place of origin, but in the act of being performed, it can be understood as a 'trace', borrowing Jacques Derrida's term: 'the trace is not only the disappearance of origin […] it means that the origin did not even disappear, that it was never constituted except reciprocally by a nonorigin, the trace, which thus becomes the origin of the origin' (1976: 61). Derrida's words ('the origin of the origin') are indeed reminiscent of the role played by Galician migrant communities in the construction of modern Galician identity. Galicianness therefore resists being pinpointed geographically (as having an original source) but comes into being as the performance of a trace, both by the migrants and those living in Galicia.

Echoing Abeigón's testimony, the mobility of Galician identity expressed via culinary performance is also suggested in *Little Galicia*, although a plot clarification is needed at this point. Since Carlos does not find the idea of going to Newark to feel 'at home' very appealing, he convinces Gonzalo to go in his place to the wedding, pretending to be him (as the friend of Carlos' mother had not seen him since he was a young boy). Therefore, while Carlos goes off to spend the weekend with a Galician girlfriend who lives in New York, Gonzalo (pretending to be Carlos) meets the Galician community in New Jersey. He is picked up at the airport by Isabel's husband, Alfredo (José Ángel Egido), a Galician from Ferrol. On their way, they stop at the Galician Centre in Newark, where Gonzalo drinks Mondariz water and Estrella Galicia beer (both Galician brands), and eats octopus (a quintessential Galician dish). Confused, he asks the waitress if the octopus came from Galicia, to which she replies: 'es de Galicia, pero lo preparamos aquí' [it's from Galicia, but we cook it here]. Hall suggests that cultural identity 'is not a fixed essence at all […] Not an essence but a *positioning*' (1996: 113). Understanding culture as a positioning (term also used by Hooper 2011: 34), as a mobile performance rather than as a fixed essence, is also helpful to reveal existing relations between cultures: we can look at Galician culture and identity not as restricted to

Galicia's geographical map but as travelling and reappearing in different parts of the world (like Abeigón's pasty and Gonzalo's octopus), therefore having multiple *positionings* instead of an essential origin, and establishing cultural relations with other identities.

Nevertheless, cultural hybridity and transnational relations across cultures are not always easily negotiated by the migrants. Like the homesick protagonist of the song 'Galicia terra nosa', who says that 'e despois na miña terra quero vivir e morrere' [and then I want to live and die in my land], the cultural and emotional dislocation caused by migration can be traumatic, as in the case of Pilar Domínguez, who describes her arrival in the U.S. as 'aterrador' [terrifying], since the living conditions that she found in this country were worse than those she had had in Galicia. As Galician culture is minoritised and peripheral within Spain, hybridisation can also be a challenge for the survival of Galician identity in the global age, as it could lead to it being dissolved into the second and third generations' American identity. In fact, cultural hybridity was not always encouraged by the first generation. As explained in several testimonies from the documentary, the second generation was restricted by their parents to having relationships with other Galicians or Spaniards, but not with Americans. This is also echoed in *Little Galicia,* in which Isabel and Alfredo's daughter Silvia (Paloma Bloyd) marries a Spaniard. Within the migrant community there is seemingly a tension between an essentialist notion of culture, expressed in the first generation's fear that their traditions would be lost within those of the host country, and the natural tendency for cultural hybridity reflected in the way the younger generations perform their identity as both American and Galician/Spanish. Furthermore, both in *Os 15000* and in *Little Galicia* we find cases of migrants who have doubts about their 'authenticity'. *Little Galicia*'s plot is in fact based around the idea of deception. When Gonzalo (who is pretending to be Carlos) meets Silvia, he learns that her fiancé Antonio has decided not to marry her. Silvia's mother, in order not to disappoint her brother (another Galician migrant living in Australia that she has

not seen in many years) asks Gonzalo-Carlos to pretend to be Antonio and plans to fake her daughter's wedding, which therefore becomes a simulation of a performance (a religious rite). Gonzalo is repeatedly asked to perform multiple identities, thus creating a simulacrum. At the same time, Alfredo (Silvia's father), confesses a secret to Gonzalo-Carlos/Antonio. He grows *pementos de Padrón* [Galician peppers] in the garden, and tells his family that he sells them to New York restaurants. The truth, however, is slightly different: 'esos pimientos que yo cuido ahí en la yarda… son una mierda. Yo no sé si será por el fucking clima o por lo que sea, pero por más que lo intento no consigo la calidad gallega aquí' [those peppers that I grow there in the yard… are crap. I don't know if it's the fucking weather or whatever, but try as I might, I can't get Galician quality here]. Therefore, he throws the peppers in the river and buys imported ones from a Manhattan shop, which he sells to the restaurants, gaining a small profit. 'Soy un farsante' [I'm a phony], Alfredo concludes. Similarly, and despite his heritage and fluency in Galician, in *Os 15000* Abeigón also questions his Galicianness: 'eu sempre son alguén de fóra, en certos aspectos. Por moito que me sinta de alá, por moito que son de alá, non son de alá, como son eles' [in some respects I'm always an outsider. As much as I feel from there, as much as I am from there, I am not from there, like they are]. He is referring to his Galician friends and relatives, who shared experiences in Galicia while growing up, while he only visited Galicia for the first time when he was seventeen, 'un ano despois de que morrera Franco' [a year after Franco's death].

The self-perception of having a deficit in one's cultural identity, or the need to compensate for geographical distance, might lead to the conclusion that the migrants over-perform their Galicianness. This is how Ana Lourido, a diplomat interviewed in *Os 15000*, understands it: 'yo observo que muchos gallegos de aquí son como más gallegos hoy en día que los propios gallegos de Galicia, porque llevan la bandera en lo alto por la Quinta Avenida en el Día de la Hispanidad y mismo los hijos se sienten muy gallegos y a lo mejor casi no

fueron nunca a Galicia' [I notice that many of the Galicians who live here are more Galician nowadays than the Galicians from Galicia, because they proudly carry the flag along Fifth Avenue on Columbus Day and their children even feel very Galician although they've probably almost never been to Galicia]. Influenced by the framing of the documentary, the migrants' testimonies can also be seen as doubly performative, an exaggerated expression of their everyday identity performance. However, Lourido's conception of Galicianness is also attached to a geographically fixed understanding of cultural identity, whereby a decentred performance would rather be a hyperbolic 'copy'. This seems to be an anxiety shared by the migrants themselves, and is highlighted in both films. *Os 15000* finishes, in fact, with Abeigón stating that his favourite Galician expression is 'e ti de quen vés sendo?' ['who's your mother?', a traditional way of asking 'who are you?']. In *Little Galicia*, Gonzalo never reveals his true identity, but Silvia and her parents grow very fond of him, to the extent that Alfredo laments not having another daughter so he could become part of the family. Although Gonzalo has been known by somebody else's names, he has always acted according to his own personality: he has performed himself. The same could be said of the migrants interviewed in *Os 15000*; regardless of whether they assume a Spanish or an American identity, whether they are in the U.S. or in Galicia, their Galicianness becomes visible in the way they perform their cultural identity.

FIG. 3 here

Conclusion

If, as argued by Fernández and Argeo (2014), Spanish migration to the U.S. has generally been 'invisible', the framing chosen by the documentary *Little Spain* renders the considerable presence of Galicians within this community 'doubly invisible'. By establishing a homogenising Spanish identity, the film ignores the relevance of local identities within this migrant community, as demonstrated by the performance of Galician interviewees and the

archival material included in the film. Although José and Joe Pérez strive to perform according to the established framing, references to the presence of Galician migrants and the everyday performance of their multiple identities subvert such a limiting approach. By contrast, the framing of the documentary *Os 15000 de Newark* and the fictional film *Little Galicia* places its emphasis on the existence of a Galician community, which allows both the migrants and the characters to express their Galicianness freely. Spanish identity is not, however, absent from these films, as the migrants seem to move comfortably across cultures, including the U.S. one (especially in the case of the second and third generations). Furthermore, even if simultaneously adhering to a Spanish and North American identity, they remain strongly attached to their Galicianness, as expressed in a variety of cultural performances. In this regard, by focusing on the performative aspect of culture, this article has suggested an understanding of Galician identity as a positioning rather than a fixed essence, as a trace instead of an expression of a unique geographical origin. This approach underscores the key role played by movement and migration (although also endowed with trauma and other negative aspects) in the construction and preservation of modern Galician culture and identity. Nevertheless, the migrants' concerns about their 'authenticity' reveal the persistence of a fixed understanding of identity, which is however constantly challenged in these films by the ways they perform their identities, both for the camera and as expression of their everyday practices in the U.S.

Works Cited

Alonso, Beito (2006) *Obreiros alén mar. Mariñeiros, fogoneiros e anarquistas galegos en New York* (Santo Tirso: A Nosa Terra).

Alonso Nogueira, Álex (2015) 'Alén da lúa de alén mar: traxectoria dos intelectuais galegos exiliados en Nova York', in *Emigración e exilio nos Estados Unidos de América:*

experiencias de Galicia e Azores, ed. by Alberto Pena, Mário Mesquita and Paula Vicente (Santiago de Compostela: Consello da Cultura Galega), 135–156.

Álvarez, Francisco (2007) *Ratas en Manhattan* (Santiago de Compostela: Sotelo Blanco).

Cardús, David (ed.) (1986) *Emigración española en USA*, Monografias de ALDEEU 2 (Madrid: Ediciones Beramar)

Colmeiro, José (2017) *Peripheral Visions/Global Sounds* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press).

Deleuze, Gilles (1990) *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester (London: The Athlone Press).

Derrida, Jacques (1976) *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press).

Díaz-Campos, Manuel (ed.) (2011) *The Handbook of Spanish Sociolinguistics* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons).

Ellies, John (2012) *Documentary. Witness and Self-revelation* (London and New York: Routledge).

Férnandez, James D. (2012), 'Entre imperios: españoles en Nueva York 1898-1945', in *La Colonia: un álbum fotográfico de inmigrantes españoles en Nueva York 1898-1945*, ed. by James D. Fernández (León: Valey Centro Cultural de Castrillón), pp. 14-45.

Fernández, James D. and Argeo, Luis (2014) *Invisible Immigrants. Spaniards in the US (1898-1945)* (New York: White Stone Ridge).

Fisher, Kimber (1997) 'Locating frames in the discursive universe', *Sociological Research Online* 2(3) < http://www.socresonline.org.uk/2/3/4.html> (accessed on 11 July 2018).

Fuentes, Víctor (2000) 'Arredor da narrativa galega no exilio', *Grial*, 145, 71–87.

(2003) 'Vigencia y exaltación de Rosalía de Castro en los escritores gallegos del exilio' in *Actas do VII Congreso Internacional de Estudos Galegos. Mulleres en Galicia. Galicia e*

os outros pobos da Península, ed. by Helena González & María Xesús Lama (Sada: Ediciós do Castro), pp 117–124.

___ (2004) 'Constantes galegas no desterro intelectual de Norteamérica. Guerra da Cal, González López, Granell, Martínez López e Rubia Barcia, *Grial*, 163, 38−49.

García-Rodeja, Carmen and Pérez Rey, Nancy (2007) 'Mulleres galegas na emigración: das Mariñas a Nova York', in *Actas do VII Congreso Internacional de Estudos Galegos. Mulleres en Galicia. Galicia e os outros pobos da Península*, ed. by Helena González and María Xesús Lama (Sada: Ediciós do Castro), 425–435.

González López, Emilio (with the collaboration of Amado Ricón) (2000) *Castelao, propagandista da República en Norteamérica* (Sada: Ediciós do Castro).

Hall, Stuart (1996) 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora', in *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. by Padmini Mongia (London; New York: St Martin's Press), 110–21.

Hooper, Kirsty (2011) *Writing Galicia into the World. New Cartographies, New Poetics* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press).

Jorge Pereira, Natalia (2004) 'As escolas indianas en Tomiño', *Pontenova, Revista de Novos Historiadores*, 10, 107–116.

Kohler Riessman, Catherine (1993) *Narrative Analysis* (London; New Delhi: Sage).

Mar-Molinero, Clare (1997) *The Spanish Speaking World. A Practical Introduction to Sociolinguistic Issues* (London; New York: Routledge).

Montrul, Silvina (2013) El *bilingüismo en el mundo hispanohablante* (Malden; Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell).

Murado, Miguel-Anxo (2008) *Otra idea de Galicia* (Barcelona: Debate).

Nichols, Bill (2010) *Introduction to Documentary*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press)

Núñez Seixas, Xosé M. (2016) *O soño da Galiza Ideal. Estudos sobre exiliados e emigrantes galegos* (Vigo: Galaxia).

Parmar, Maya (2013) 'Reading the double diaspora: representing Gujarati East African cultural identity in Britain', *Atlantis,* 35(1), 137–155.

Pérez Rey, Nancy (2008) 'Unha achega á emigración galega a Nova York', *Estudos Migratorios* 1(2), 31–61.

Rey García, Marta (1994) 'Los españoles de Estados Unidos y la Guerra Civil (1936−1939)', *Revista Española de Estudios Norteamericanos*, 7, 107–120.

___ (1997), *Stars for Spain. La Guerra Civil española en los Estados Unidos* (Sada: Ediciós do Castro).

Romero, Eugenia, (2012) *Contemporary Galician Culture in a Global Context. Movable Identities* (Plymouth: Lexington Books).

Rueda, Germán (1993) *La emigración contemporánea de españoles a Estados Unidos 1820-1950. De "Dons" a "Misters"* (Madrid: MAPFRE).

Rueda, Germán (2008) 'Asociaciones y otras formas de relación de los españoles en Norteamérica', in *El asociacionismo en la emigración española a América*, ed. Juan Andrés Blanco Rodríguez (Salamanca: Uned Zamora & Junta de Castilla y León), 235–76.

'Rueda y Miranda visitan a la comunidad gallega en Newark y participan en el 75 aniversario de la Casa de Galicia de Nueva York', *España Exterior. El periódico de las comunidades españolas en el mundo,* 25 September 2015, <http://www.espanaexterior.com/noticias/rueda-y-miranda-visitan-a-la-comunidad-gallega-en-newark-y-participan-en-el-75-aniversario-de-la-casa-de-galicia-de-nueva-york-2/> (accessed 11 July 2018)

Santos Rego, Miguel Anxo (2015) ‘A comunidade galega en USA. Unha ruta de aculturación en perspectiva’, in *Emigración e exilio nos Estados Unidos de América: experiencias de Galicia e Azores*, ed. by Alberto Pena, Mário Mesquita and Paula Vicente (Santiago de Compostela: Consello da Cultura Galega), 83–94.

Schechner, Richard (2013) *Performance Studies: An Introduction* (London; New York: Routledge).

Stewart, Miranda (1999) *The Spanish Language Today* (London; New York: Routledge).

Toribio, Almeida Jaqueline (2011) ‘Code-Switching among US Latinos’, in *The Handbook of Spanish Sociolinguistics*, ed. by Manuel Díáz-Campos (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons), 530–552.

Varela-Lago, Ana (2008) ‘A emigración galega aos Estados Unidos: galegos en Luisiana, Florida e Nova York (1870-1940)’, *Estudos Migratorios* 1(2), 63–84.

Vilar Álvarez, Manuel (2009) ‘“Vin porque me trouxeron, non quería vir”. De Carnota a Astoria. A emigración de Carnota na cidade de Nova York’, *Estudos Migratorios* 2(2), 69–90.

Filmography:

Balder, Artur (dir.) (2014), *Little Spain*.

Fernández, Anxo (2007), *Os 15000 de Newark*.

Ponte, Alber (2015), *Little Galicia*.

[1] New York was also the destination of a number of Galician exiles. See Fuentes (2000. 2003 and 2004), Rey García (1994, 1997) and Nogueira (2012).

[2] I would like to express my gratitude to both Anxo Fernández and Alber Ponte for giving me access to their films.

[3] In *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze explains these concepts as follows: ‘If we say of the simulacrum that it is a copy of a copy, an infinitely degraded icon, an infinitely loose resemblance, we miss the essential, that is, the difference in nature between simulacrum and copy, or the aspect by which they form two halves of a single division. The copy is an image endowed with resemblance, the simulacrum is an image without resemblance’ (1990: 257).

[4] The 'glocal' is here understood, following José Colmeiro, as 'new hybrid realities and new forms of identity that bind the old with the new, the local with the global […] the interaction of the local and the global has produced new postperipheral "glocal" cultural forms that are transforming the inherited status quo'(2017: 26).
[5] El Faro was originally opened by other Galicians in the 1920s and it was taken by José in the 1950s.
[6] According to Rueda's extensive research, apart from Spanish and Galician societies, there were also a number of societies in New York founded by migrants from different parts of Spain, for example: Centro Aragonés [Aragonese Centre] and Centro Asturiano [Asturian Centre] (both later integrated into La Nacional), Centro Vasco-Americano [Basque-American Centre], Centro Andaluz [Andalusian Centre], Círculo Valenciano [Valencian Circle], and Casal Catalá [Catalan Centre] (1993: 235-236).
[7] The official names of these cities are A Coruña and Ourense (in Galician), but I have used the Spanish names in the translation, in keeping with José Pérez's usage.
[8] The study of the interactions between Spanish and English in the U.S. has received a significant amount of academic interest, especially regarding the bilingualism of the Latino community (see for example Mar-Molinero 1997, Stewart 1999, Díaz Campos 2011, and Montrul 2013). However, the focus on migrants from Latin American countries has largely ignored Spanish speakers arriving from Spain, some of whom are already bilingual (as in the case of Galicians). Although it is out of the scope of this article, the use of Iberian minority languages in the U.S. and the effects of their contact with English would provide new insights into the language use of Spanish speaking migrants in this country.
[9] Included in Varela-Lago (2008: 78).
[10] This practice is criticised by migrant writer Francisco Álvarez when referring to a restaurant owned by Galicians in New York (2007: 58-59).
[11] In the case of the documentary this is done spontaneously by the interviewees, and in the feature film it is scripted.
[12] Toribio defines code-switching as 'the widely accepted term for the linguistic phenomenon whereby a speaker uses two linguistic codes within a single speech event, alternating between phrases, clauses, and utterances, often with no change in addressee or subject' (2011: 530). It includes the use of *lexical borrowings* (quite often discourse markers and tags such as 'so', as in *Os 15000*), *semantic calques*, and *loan translations* (Toribio 2011: 531-532). Code switching is practiced at different levels of 'proficiency', as 'there exist qualitative differences among the contact forms of fluent bilinguals, Spanish-speaking immigrants who have acquired English in adulthood, and native speakers of English who have acquired Spanish in adult classrooms' (Toribio 2011: 536), and a fluent combination of both languages requires speakers to be proficient bilinguals with a high level of competence in both languages. In the case of the Latino community, the practice of code-switching is often a form of 'performance of identity', which seeks 'a positive assertion and enactment of their Latinidad' (Toribio 2011: 540). Stewart also points out that '[c]ode switching may show where the speaker's affections and loyalties lie' (1999: 194). By contrast, it seems that the practice of code-switching by Galician speakers in the U.S. would rather show the acculturation of these speakers to this country and would work as a marker of their acquired U.S. identity rather than a performance of their Galicianness. For more on code-switching between Spanish and English in the U.S. see also Montrul (2013: 119-124).